healing, witness, and light—together | Boyd Camak

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Boyd Camak, hypocrite with logs in my eyes. (Matthew 7:3-5) Admiring the counterintuitive way. (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)

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This text emphasizes that a key way the church can participate in Christ's victory is by bearing witness. This witness involves confessing sins to one another and sharing stories of how the world has wounded individuals and how they have in turn wounded others, thereby exposing the systemic issues and false narratives that attempt to define identity. By telling the truth about their experiences and Christ's healing, individuals and the collective church can become a place of light and reality that the world cannot overcome, offering a space of healing and exposure for the darkness, and helping others to discern truth from lies within oppressive systems.

voice dictation:

Just a few evening thoughts after a better discussion with some friends.

The point is that one way that the church can be can participate in and continue on in Christ's victory is to be a witness.

And by that I mean that just as Christ as a dead man on a tree told the truth of the world in his flesh.

Just as Christ as a dead man on a tree exposed corrupt religion and corrupt government.

We too who are following in Christ's way together individually, yes, but more importantly together we can witness to each other what this world has done to us.

And through us, we can confess to each other what I have done in the name of corporate profit.

We can confess what we have done as members of healthcare delivery systems that have conflicts of interest that are not visible.

We can each confess our sins one to another, not to check a box, but to witness to the work that Christ has done in our spirit that allows us to claim our identity as a beloved child of God.

And thereby frees us from the false narratives and the false names and the false categories that this world puts us in.

We don't have to claim our identity from our job or from our name or from our family or whatever—our identity is rooted in Christ and that's what allows us to bask in that love of Christ and claim that love of Christ.

And we can set down all these other demands, all these other claims on our identity and we can set down our burden to appear perfect.

We can tell each other stories about how this world has wounded us and how we've wounded others in this world system.

And by telling each other these stories, we are witnessing to how Christ has freed us in such a way that it allows us to recognize and to claim and to share these stories.

But we're also providing a witness, not only through our own story, but we are as we witness to our role in the world and the world around us and the systems we find ourselves in.

And we witness to each other about how we're trapped in the things we do to maintain our status in these systems and how we're compromised and how there's no easy way out.

There's no out, we're stuck in these world systems, but as we tell the truth to each other and we help each other see the systems that we find ourselves in that are so pervasive that they even try to claim the right to define who we are.

As we start to let the light in and we start to put the devil to flight by exposing him to the light of Christ, we become freer and freer and it's not a one and done, it's not a straight line and it's messy and there are unintended consequences.

But we start to become a light as a body, as a corporate body and we may not be able to go out and take on every good cause and bind up every wound.

But we can at least be a place that is truthful, that is honest because we have grace and we can start to be a place of light.

And as the world continues to connive its latest whatever, we become a place where we know who we are, we're defined by Christ's love and we tell the truth to each other and we help each other to get a handle on what the truth is by exposing the lies of this world, that it tells us about ourselves and about each other and that is growth, that is spiritual growth, that helps us to be more like Christ because it helps us to see the lies and we become the body of Christ.

We become a place of truth because the truth is a dead man on a tree that revealed what this world does to God and what this world does to truth.

And as we step into that light, the light of truth about real things, we can start to have conversations about not just church stuff, not just theology and Bible study, although that's certainly important, it's very important, it's foundational.

The liturgy is life giving, the Eucharist is a must for me anyway, but those are the things that allow us to look at our lives in total and how they intersect with others and we can kind of get other people to help us see things that we can't see in our lives and vice versa.

And we start to get a picture of reality and it's humbling and it's freeing and that is the kind of light, that is the kind of witness that will allow us to set each other free through the power of the Holy Spirit and Christ and that is what will become a witness to the world.

We can't solve every problem, we can't take up every cause, but we can align ourselves with the Spirit, we can align ourselves with the Holy Spirit so that we burn brightly with the light of Christ and that we burn brightly as the light of Christ in the church and we don't take our light and put it under a bushel.

We let our light shine and that doesn't mean proselytizing, that means abiding in the truth of Christ and all its implications.

And if we become a witness individually and corporately and as we draw people in because the Holy Spirit brings them to us, we will be a place of truth and that is something that's attractive.

And that is how we will overcome the world.

We will overcome the world because Christ says he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

That light burning bright, that light burning bright that tells us that we are beloved of God and that we are going to help each other see through broken systems, conflicts of interest, things, you know, mental health care systems that are corrupted or that have a profit motive because they've been corrupted by financial interest.

Or whatever it might be, you know, the financialization of the local economy, pick your poison, you know, it could be the latest things off the newspaper about people being unjustly sent to concentration camps that they call prisons but they don't even give them a day in court.

They're all these wicked things and, you know, it could be something as simple as it could be that, you know, the asylum, the laws are being changed to make it much more difficult and expensive to get asylum in the United States.

That's one thing that I'm told is up for, it's on the books for a bill that could be passed, but I think that we need to get these stories out of our individual perspectives.

We need to share them with the church.

And even though it doesn't count as church talk, it should because it's the truth of what's happening.

If we break down these barriers amongst ourselves, we can burn bright with the light of Christ.

And as we become people of truth, we're able to put truth, we're able to maintain boundaries and to start to detach ourselves from the system.

I'm thinking of Kathryn Tanner's book from Yale Divinity School about finance capitalism.

But all this to say, it's a long-winded way of saying that we need to be able to face the truth of Christ's love for us and face the truth of what, how we're trapped in systems and in relationships and in ideologies.

And we need to help each other see the truth and the lies that we're all in.

And as we continue to face the truth, we'll be able to help take a step towards healing the world.

And this shouldn't be controversial.

I hope this is not controversial because the idea of social justice is controversial.

So I'm not even using that word.

I don't even think it's the same kind of concept.

But in my view, there seems to be this idea that anything that has to do with anything controversial or practical, anything that's other than church talk or pure charity seems to be put in the social justice box.

And it gets either banned or ignored or whatever.

And even if you do like the idea of social justice ministries, there's so many problems in the world.

Like where do you start?

When you start by listening to the Holy Spirit, everybody always will have to listen to the Holy Spirit and have group discernment.

That's how we move our way forward.

But my proposal is that if we have a culture, I don't even like the word culture.

If we have a spirit of telling the truth to each other and in the light of Christ telling the truth of what this world does to us and what it's done to us, we don't have to be ashamed of that.

We may have been deceived by the world, but that's what the world does.

We have to be able to tell the story of how we're crucified by this world and how Christ healed us.

And what do we learn in the process of that?

How can we have a mosaic, a mosaic of testimonies, a mosaic of testimonies of how this world has wounded us and how Christ has healed us?

And we have a mosaic, we have a tableau, we have a mosaic picture of stories of how Christ has rescued us from this wicked world and how He has set us on a path of following Him.

And as we have this spirit, this light, this not under a bushel, that is something that the world cannot defeat.

The world cannot defeat the light of Christ.

Christ has already won.

We just have to help, we just have to join Christ in that victory.

He's already won, but the way He won was a different kind of way.

He won by losing.

He won by outwitting the devil.

That's what Easter is about.

And I'm not saying it's just a metaphor, I'm saying, but it is a metaphor, not just a metaphor.

But Christ has won and we can follow in Christ's path and we can talk about our story.

Just like Christ's story liberates us, our story can liberate others.

And our stories together as a chorus can be a bright light.

And that is how we can not be paralyzed.

We're all paralyzed by all the wickedness in the world that we see on TV or that we watch on social media.

Or that we just have as holdover some of our dysfunctional childhoods or that we have an addiction or whatever.

But we're all isolated.

We're all isolated in our own little world.

But if we can create a space, if we can allow each other to talk about our wounds, not like we have to have it all figured out before we can do a book report, but if we can just talk real talk as appropriate about how Christ is healing us, how the world is wounding us, how it's all playing out in our lives, and then we can talk about how it's playing out in each other's lives.

And then we become a bright light and we can't solve every problem and we're not called to necessarily, but we can create a space of healing and a space that exposes the wickedness of the world.

And we can get a foothold and we can have a bunker and we can have a point of offense that we're sending people out.

We're sending out people that are healed, that are part of this community, that can be a witness.

That can be a witness of what Christ has done, what Christ has done in us, and what Christ is doing in the world.

And we don't have to solve every problem, we don't have to fight every battle, but we can be a witness.

That's what Christ's Kingdom is.

Christ's Kingdom is Reality with a capital R.

And we don't have to do anything.

We have to let Christ work through us.

And yes, I'm not saying that we're going to be passive or whatever, there's all these theological theories and blah, blah, blah.

But Christ is working through us and that is what allows us to be a witness.

And that is how Christ has decided to reveal his Kingdom is through us.

And as a witness to the light of Christ, we can expose the darkness.

We may not be able to bind up every wound right now, but that way at least we won't be paralyzed.

We can focus on Christ, we can be the light of Christ, we can bring our own wounds and our own sins.

And we can rejoice that Christ has healed us and continues to heal us.

We can go out, we can be a witness, we can have the peace of Christ, we can tell our story.

And in the process, the Holy Spirit may or may not give us practical things to do.

Hopefully He will.

But the alternative is to all be divided, all be isolated, all be conflicted about what the priorities are.

Retreating into church talk, arguing with each other about whether something is social justice or not.

So, I hope that makes sense.